

## AMAZING GRACE

By John F. Hall

One definition of grace is that it is the free and unmerited favor of God. I've mentioned it over and over again in my stories. It is Christ's blessing, that has allowed me to write hundreds of my stories. In Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 24, are these words: "And all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ." Nettie Gornick wrote a short poem called,



"When You Leave This World Behind You." These are her words: "When you leave this world behind you, will you go with God's good grace? Do you support and comfort others and with their suffering help erase? We are here for just a moment, so we try to do our best. God is ever watching closely as he puts us to the test. Kindness need not cost a fortune — we are blessed with what we give. It should be offered freely, so all in peace and joy can live."

My wife, Paula, and I live on a hill, in the middle of a farm. We own just one acre, the rest belongs to someone else, but we so enjoy just being here. Shirley Hile Powell wrote a poem called, "God's Grace." These are her words: "As I sat on the grassy hillside, a soft breeze blew across my face. It seemed to cover me with a peace; I felt it was God's grace. The beauty of God's splendor almost took my breath away. Lush golden apples everywhere — I bowed my head and prayed. The brook beside the meadow flowed gently below. Droplets of silvery crystal danced; another gift God has bestowed. The sturdy trees that surround me appeared like cathedrals grand. They added to the beauty that God spread across the land. I thank my God for everything especially the delight of this place, and for the love He has for us as it is filled with His holy grace."

This summer's heat has kept me inside. The humidity takes my breath away. I so miss sitting in my front porch swing. It's where I wrote so many of my best stories. I look forward to autumn, when the temperatures begin to fall, and I can return to my front porch swing. Mary Ann Jameson wrote a short poem called, "On My Old Front Porch Swing." These are her words: "How I love these quiet mornings, when summertime is here. To sit in the early hours, when earth is hushed and still. My old porch swing is the perfect place, to sit and rest a spell. Drinking in the beauty of the stream, the trees and hills. But most of all, in this quiet place, I am alone with God. My soul refreshed, I can carry on, as down life's road I trod."

Soon, I will get out my two front porch swing cushion pads. I will tie one cushion pad to the back of the swing, and the other pad to the swing seat. I guess the front porch swing is as old as me, and it has served at least five other families, that lived in this old farm house, on Dyers Hill.

The first day of autumn is September 22. The past week, no rain has fallen. The weather forecast is calling for another rain-free week. My front yard is brown from the lack of rain. At least six wild

rabbits enjoy eating my front yard grass. Now, they are having to find patches of green, protected by the maple trees. The past Summer was very wet, with rain almost every day. Now, we seem to be in a drought, with no rain in sight. Across the field is the East Golden Pond Fire Station. I expect they might be busy with brush fires, as the hot weather continues to dry the brown brush.

In John, Chapter 1, Verse 16, are these words: "From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace." It is what we do with that grace, that matters, for all our eternity. It is His grace that teaches us to pray. Helen Parker wrote a short poem called, "Don't Forget To Pray." These are her words: "When things are going smoothly and you plan a busy day, do the things you have to do, but don't forget to pray. The Lord will be your stronghold when trials come your way; He will never forsake you, but don't forget to pray. Be sure to thank and praise Him, fear not or show dismay, for He will hear and help you, but don't forget to pray."

Maya Anthony wrote a poem called, "Grace." These are her words: "In whisper soft and light as air, grace dances, unseen, everywhere. In gentle words and tender care, in silent moments, grace is there. In morning light and evening grace, in nature's arms, a warm embrace. In kindness shown without a trace, in quietude, grace finds its place. In fleeting smiles, in stairs above, in acts of unrequited love. In all that's pure, in dreams we chase, in life's ballet, grace moves with grace."

In 1 Peter, Chapter 4, Verse 10, are these words: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful servants of God's grace in its various forms." My gift from Christ, is His grace upon grace, that I use to write my stories. I share them by giving them away. As I've said before, we only get to keep, in eternity, what we give away, on earth, today. One of my favorite hymns, "Amazing Grace," was written by John Newton in 1772. My favorite lyric, in the hymn, is this: "Twas grace that brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home." Newton and I share a similar experience. He was on the ship, "Greyhound" when it sailed into a ferocious storm in 1748. I was on a Liberty ship, when it steamed into a typhoon in 1965. We both believed that it was God's grace that saved us. When John Newton was on his deathbed, he reportedly told a friend, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things — that I am a great sinner, and God is a great Savior." Like Newton, my memory is slowly slipping away. And I'm a sinner, as Christ surely knows. I'm trying to crawl my way to Heaven. And it is Christ's amazing grace, that has saved a wretch like me.

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\*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>